

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 0488

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, HA

SUBJECT: CABINET CHANGES IN HAITI: FOREIGN SECRETARY RAYMOND OUT

1. ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER, SECSTATE FOR COORDINATION AND INFORMATION PAUL BLANCHET ANNOUNCED FOLLOWING CABINET CHANGES ON LOCAL TELEVISION AND RADIO AT 9:00 P.M. MARCH 19: (A) EDNER BRUTUS, FORMERLY SECSTATE FOR EDUCATION, APPOINTED SECSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REPLACING ADRIEN RAYMOND; (B) BLANCHET APPOINTED SECSTATE FOR THE INTERIOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE, REPLACING BRETON NAZAIRE; (C) PIERRE GOUSSE, FORMERLY UNDER SECSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, APPOINTED SECSTATE FOR COORDINATION AND INFORMATION, REPLACING BLANCHET; (D) JEAN MONTES LEFRANC APPOINTED SECSTATE FOR EDUCATION, REPLACING BRUTUS; (E) GERARD DORCELY, FORMERLY DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, APPOINTED UNDER SECSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REPLACING GOUSSE.

2. BLANCHET ALSO ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENT OF NEW MAYORS AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, SOME RELATIVELY MINOR MILITARY CHANGES, MAINLY RETIREMENTS AND PROMOTIONS, AND SOME SECONDARY-LEVEL CHANGES IN HAITIAN DIPLOMATIC AND COUSULAR SERVICE (TO BE REPORTED SEPARATELY).

3. OF CHANGES ANNOUNCED, MOST IMPORTANT ARE DISMISSAL OF
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FOREIGN SECRETARY RAYMOND FROM THE CABINET AND SHIFT OF

PAUL BLANCHET FROM INFORMATION MINISTRY TO MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR. BOTH CHANGES HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED FOR SOME TIME AND SHOULD COME AS NO GREAT SURPRISE IN HAITI. RAYMOND HAS BEEN ON THIS ICE EVER SINCE THE OUSTER OF HIS BROTHER, LT. GEN. CLAUDE RAYMOND, AS ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF BY PRESIDENT DUVALIER LAST AUGUST. EMBASSY HAS REPORTED DUVALIER'S LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN RAYMOND AND DESIRE TO REPLACE HIM SINCE DECEMBER (P-AU-P 2168; A-16). DISMISSED INTERIOR MINISTER NAZAIRE WAS A LACKLUSTER, POLITICALLY UNIMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE CABINET, AN APPOINTEE OF MADAME SIMONE O. DUVALIER, WHO SUFFERED A STROKE IN JANUARY AND HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PERFORM HIS DUTIES SINCE THEN.

4. NEW FOREIGN SECRETARY EDNER BRUTUS, 62 YEARS OLD, IS A WIDELY-RESPECTED BLACK INTELLECTUAL AND EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT WHO HAS BEEN IN GOVERNMENT IN ONE CAPACITY OR ANOTHER SINCE THE 1930'S. DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF FRANCOIS DUVALIER, BRUTUS SERVED AS AMBASSADOR TO BRAZIL (1958-65) AND AS AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS (1965-70). HE WAS APPOINTED SECSTATE FOR EDUCATION IN 1970. IN HAITI BRUTUS IS KNOWN AS A DISTINGUISHED WRITER AND EDUCATOR, A GOOD CONVERSATIONALIST, HONEST, AND INDEPENDENT-MINDED. BRUTUS SEEMS WELL-DISPOSED TOWARD THE U.S., ALTHOUGH HE HAS HAD NO EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE WITH AMERICANS, AND SHOULD BE A CAPABLE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

5. PAUL BLANCHET OVER THE PAST HALF YEAR HAS BECOME A LEADING MEMBER OF THE CABINET. HIS SHIFT FROM THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION TO THE PORTFOLIO OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE ESTABLISHES HIM EVEN MORE SOLIDLY AS ONE OF THE TOP POLICY-MAKING MEMBERS OF THE GOH. LIKE BRUTUS, BLANCHET IS AN "OLD GUARD" DUVALIERIST WIDELY RESPECTED IN HAITI FOR HIS INDEPENDENT-MINDEDNESS AND HONESTY. IN HIS NEW POSITION HE IS NOT EXPECTED TO HAVE ANY AUTHORITY OVER THE HAITIAN ARMED FORCES, WHICH REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENT, BUT BLANCHET SHOULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE INTERNAL POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF OF HAITI (THE APPOINTMENT OF PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS, THE CONTROL OF MOVEMENT, AND INTERNAL SECURITY POLICIES IN GENERAL). THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT BLANCHET ACTIVELY SOUGHT JOB OF INTERIOR MINISTER, AND MAY HOPE TO USE

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IT TO CARRY OUT EXTENSIVE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM IN THE COUNTRY. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT BLANCHET'S WEIGHT WILL BE THROWN ON THE SIDE OF FURTHER LIBERALIZATION OR EASING OF POLITICAL CONTROLS IN HAITI.

6. NEW EDUCATION MINISTER LEFRANC HAS NOT HELD HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN RECENT YEARS, BUT HIS IS EXPERIENCED IN EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT AND GENERALLY WELL-REGARDED. LE FRANC IS ALSO A

LONG-TIME ASSOCIATE OF PAUL BLANCHET'S, AND A CO-FOUNDER OF THE BLANCHET DAILY NEWSPAPER, PANORAMA. NEW INFORMATION SECRETARY PIERRE GOUSSE, 55 YEARS OLD, IS A CAREER DIPLOMAT AND EDUCATOR BY BACKGROUND RATHER THAN A POLITICAL FIGURE. HE IS WELL-KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY AS A COMPETENT FORMER NO. 2 IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. RESPECTED FOR HIS INTELLECTUAL CREDENTIALS (GOUSSE IS A FORMER PROFESSOR OF LATIN AND GREEK), THE NEW INFORMATION SECRETARY SHOULD BE A CAPABLE, BUT POLITICALLY UNIMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE CABINET. THE NEW UNDER SECSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, GERARD DORCELY, HAS BEEN A HIGHLY RESPECTED DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS, HAS ABLY SERVED AS DEAN OF THE INSTITUTE WHICH TRAINS FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS, AND SHOULD PROVIDE USEFUL CONTINUITY IN THE WORK OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, COMPLEMENTING BRUTUS WELL.

7. EMBASSY VIEWS THESE LATEST CABINET CHANGES IN HAITI AS GENERALLY POSITIVE, PROMISING A MORE UNIFIED, STRONGER CABINET THAN BEFORE AND IMPROVED ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, ALL OF THE IMPORTANT ECONOMIC PORTFOLIOS IN THE CABINET WERE UNAFFECTED BY THE LATEST CHANGES, ENSURING CONTINUITY IN GOVERNMENT'S KEY ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS UNDER THE COMPETENT "TECHNOCRAT" MINISTERS IN THE CABINET, SUCH AS PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER PIERRE PETIT, FINANCE MINISTER EMMANUEL BROS, AND COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER SERGE FOURCAND.

8. POLITICALLY, THE LATEST CABINET REPRESENTS A CONTINUATION, AND SOMETHING OF A CULMINATION OF THE PROCESS BEGUN IN LATE 1972 WHEREBY PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER HAS STEADILY ASSERTED HIS OWN COMMAND OF THE GOH, RESHUFFLING HIS TOP ADMINISTRATIVE AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO REPLACE OFFICIALS

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HE INHERITED WHEN HE TOOK OFFICE WITH OTHERS OF HIS OWN PREFERENCE. THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF, ASSISTED BY BLANCHET, WAS THE MOVING FORCE BEHIND THESE LATEST CHANGES. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT THE PRESIDENT'S MOTHER, MADAME SIMONE O. DUVALIER, WHO HAD DECISIVE INFLUENCE ON CABINET APPOINTMENTS IN THE FIRST YEARS OF JEAN-CLAUDE'S PRESIDENCY, WAS RECENTLY PRESSING FOR THE OUSTER OF SEVERAL OF THE "TECHNOCRAT" MINISTERS IN THE CABINET, ALL OF WHOM WERE RETAINED IN LATEST SHAKEUP. (P-AU-P 0078). IN THIS SENSE, LATEST CHANGES REPRESENT CLEAR REJECTION OF WHAT MADAME DUVALIER DESIRED AND UNDERSCORE UNCHALLENGED AUTHORITY OF JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER IN THE GOH TODAY. WITH THE LATEST CHANGES, JEAN-CLAUDE NOW HAS A CABINET COMPRISED ALMOST ENTIRELY OF PEOPLE HE HAS APPOINTED, RATHER THAN HOLDOVERS FROM HIS FATHER'S PRESIDENCY OR NOMINEES

OF FORMER STRONGMAN LUCKNER CAMBRONNE OR MADAME DUVALIER.
THE CHANCES SEEM GOOD FOR NEW CABINET TO REMAIN IN PLACE
FOR SOME TIME TO COME, WITH ONLY OCCASIONAL SPOT CHANGES.
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